

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 IO-14 DRC-01 /119 W

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R 101817Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6987

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMCONSUL BELFAST

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 00458

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, UK, EI

SUBJECT: NORTHERN IRELAND: BRITISH WILL SOLDIER ON

BEGIN SUMMARY: IN A RECENT DISCUSSION, NORTHERN IRELAND
OFFICE UNDERSECRETARY TREVELYAN COMMENTED THAT DESPITE
UNCERTAIN OUTLOOK FOR SUCCESS OF NEW NI EXECUTIVE,
BRITISH SAW NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO SOLDIER ON. THEY WILL
TRY AS SENSIBLY AS POSSIBLE TO DO WHAT IS WITHIN THEIR
LIMITED POWER TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS IN ULSTER AND TO COPE
WITH CRISES AS THEY ARISE. TREVELYAN SAID THAT WITH
EXECUTIVE NOW IN OFFICE AND ABOUT TO EXERCISE LIMITED
POWERS DEVOLVED TO IT UNDER NI CONSTITUTION ACT, NO
FURTHER WESTMINSTER PARLIAMENTARY ACTION WAS NEEDED.
END SUMMARY

1. WHEN ASKED FOR HIS VIEWS ABOUT FAULKNER'S DEFEAT BY
HIS UNIONIST PARTY OPPONENTS, TREVELYAN SAID THIS HAD
PROBABLY BEEN INEVITABLE. HE THOUGHT IT BETTER THAT IT
OCCURRED EARLIER THAN LATER. BRITISH WILL DO EVERYTHING
IN THEIR POWER TO HELP FAULKNER GET THROUGH HIS INITIAL
PERIOD IN OFFICE. THEY CONSIDER HIS SURVIVAL A KEY TO
SUCCESS OF NEW CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS IN NI AND
BELIEVE THAT SDLP AND ALLIANCE COALITION MEMBERS IN
EXECUTIVE FEEL SAME WAY.

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2. TREVELYAN CONSIDERS THAT NI POLITICAL SITUATION HAS BEEN CLARIFIED BY UNIONIST SPLIT. DIFFICULT AS THIS IS, HE THINKS THERE ARE BETTER POSSIBILITIES FOR POLITICAL PROGRESS NOW, WITH PROTESTANT SPLIT, THAN THERE WERE WHEN CATHOLIC MINORITY WAS UNIFIED IN OPPOSITION TO ANY FORM OF NI GOVERNMENT. BRITISH UNDERSTAND UNHAPPY PREDICAMENT OF MANY UNIONISTS IN NI, THEIR DISTRUST OF IRISH GOVERNMENT PROMISES AND FEELINGS THAT BRITISH ARE FORCING THEM DOWN PATH TO SOME KIND OF IRISH UNION. GIVEN THESE FEELINGS AND WELL-KNOWN OBSTACLES TO ACHIEVING ANY KIND OF POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION IN NI, BRITISH SEE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO CONTINUE POLICIES THEY HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING FOR PAST 18 MONTHS. WHILE NOT BY ANY MEANS PERFECT, THESE POLICIES HAVE PRODUCED SITUATION WHERE ONE CAN AT LEAST SEE SOME POSSIBILITY FOR POLITICAL ADVANCE.

3. TREVELYAN DESCRIBED IRISH GOVERNMENT'S POST-SUNNINGDALE PERFORMANCE AS DEPRESSING. BRITISH BELIEVE THEY ARE WELL INFORMED ABOUT POLITICAL REALITIES IN REPUBLIC, BUT ARE CONVINCED IRISH MUST FIND A WAY TO DEAL REALISTICALLY WITH CONCERNS OF NI PROTESTANTS, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO ARREST AND CONVICTION OF MURDERERS. TREVELYAN SAID THAT BRITISH DO NOT DOUBT IRISH GOVERNMENT'S GOOD INTENTIONS AND UNDERSTAND THEY MAY BE MOVING AS FAST AS THEY FEEL THEY CAN. BUT IT'S A SORRY SITUATION, AND RECENT ARREST AND SUBSEQUENT RELEASE OF 14 IRA MEMBERS, TOGETHER WITH STATEMENTS DOWNPLAYING IMPORTANCE OF IRISH SUNNINGDALE CONCESSIONS ON INTEGRITY OF NI, WERE A PRETTY DISMAL PERFORMANCE.

4. IN THIS CONNECTION, TREVELYAN CORRECTED AN IMPRESSION
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NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 IO-14 DRC-01 /119 W

----- 065745

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 00458

WE HAD EARLIER BEEN GIVEN BY FCO (LONDON'S 14783) THAT IRISH HAD MADE SUNNINGDALE COMMITMENT TO USE SPECIAL TRIBUNALS TO TRY THOSE ARRESTS FORUDRIMES OF POLITICAL MURDER IN NORTH. BRITISH WOULD LIKE THIS TO BE DONE AND THINK IT IS PROBABLY ONLY WAY THAT IRISH WILL BE ABLE TO OBTAIN CONVICTIONS, HKUHHZ TREVELYAN SAID, THERE IS NO IRISH GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO THIS COURSE OF ACTION.

5. SPEAKING OF CURRENT BOMBING CAMPAIGN IN LONDON, TREVELYAN SAID THAT EVER SINCE IRA HAD GONE OVER TO ITS NEW SMALL-CELL ORGANIZATION, IT HAD BEEN EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT FOR BRITISH INTELLIGENCE TO GET A LINE ON WHO WAS DOING BOMBING. HE THOUGHT EVENTUALLY SOME OF BOMBERS WOULD BE CAUGHT AND PUNISHED, BUT DOUBTED THAT GOVERNMENT COULD DO VERY MUCH MORE TO PREVENT FURTHER INCIDENTS. HE BELIEVES THEY WILL STOP ONLY WHEN BOMBERS REALIZE THAT THEIR ACTIONS ARE NOT ACHIEVING DESIRED PURPOSE OF REVERSING BRITISH POLICY OR FORCING BRITISH CONCESSIONS TO IRA DEMANDS. DESPITE SOME PUBLIC WEARI-NESS WITH IRISH PROBLEM, TREVELYAN SAID, HMG, SUPPORTED BY OPPOSITION PARTIES, HAD NO ALTERNATIVE TO FOLLOWING

ITS PRESENT COURSE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SITUATION, POLITICAL CRIMES, ARRESTS, PARTY CONSTITUTION, PARTY ALLIANCE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 JAN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LONDON00458
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740151/aaaabvyl.tel
Line Count: 157
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 JUL 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19-Jul-2001 by boyleja>; APPROVED <20 DEC 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NORTHERN IRELAND: BRITISH WILL SOLDIER ON BEGIN SUMMARY: IN A RECENT DISCUSSION, NORTHERN IRELAND
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, UK
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005